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No. 557

AMERICAN CONSULATE

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STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

DIVISION OF
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Valparaiso, Chile February 1, 1940

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THE AMERICAN PUBLIC
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS
FEB 9-1940
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SUBJECT: Doctor Hermann Frederick Erben

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SIR:

THE HONORABLE
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

sen. fawcett
MR. BERLE

NOTED
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

I have the honor to refer to my Strictly Confidential
Despatch No. 353 of January 29, 1940 (file no. 130/711/811.4),
relating to the activities of Doctor Hermann Frederick Erben.
On January 25th Doctor Erben appeared again at this Consulate
as a member of the crew of the Grace ship NIGHTINGALE. He
reported that he had left the Japanese ship HEIYO MARU at
Antofagasta and had signed on the American vessel on which he
hopes to reach the Canal Zone in order to proceed to the West
Coast of the United States or else to continue his voyage to
New York City. The Consulate at Antofagasta has given cer-
tain information about this matter in its Despatch No. 52 of
January 26, 1940 (file no. 130/510).

Respectfully yours,

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Arnold S. Mellieca

Arnold S. Mellieca,
American Consul

Submit in duplicate to the Department
Extra copy for the supervising Consulate General
130/711/811.4
RM/msi

130-ERSEN, HERMANN FREDERICK
FEB 10 1940
MAR - 3 1940

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N. N. I. 96

ISSUED BY THE INTELLIGENCE DIVISION, OFFICE OF CHIEF OF
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ATTACHE'S REPORT

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From Chile Date 23 Jan 1940 19 Serial No. 42 File No. 1
(Commence new series each January first) (Select proper number from O. N. I. Index)
Source of information American Consul - Valparaiso
Subject German Merchant Ship
(Nation reported on) (Index title as per index sheet) (Abbreviate)

Reference
Basis: (The review, indexing, and distribution of reports by O. N. I. will be greatly expedited if a brief summary of the contents is entered in this space. Mention leading geographical, personal, or political names, and the gist of the report.)
DOCTOR HERMANN FREDERICK ERBEN, FORMERLY SHIP'S DOCTOR ABOARD SCUTTLED GERMAN MERCHANT SHIP "WANDERER" WHICH SUNKED SOUTH OF VALPARAISO WAS MESSAGE TO OBTAIN RELIEF AND TRANSPORTATION TO AMERICAN CONSUL IN VALPARAISO. HE PREVIOUSLY SERVED IN AMERICAN MERCHANT SHIPS. PREVIOUS STATION: MERCHANT DOCTOR ON "WANDERER" WHICH SUNKED SOUTH OF VALPARAISO.

Reference: (a) N. N. I. Chile Serial No. 29 of 23 January 1940.
(b) N. N. I. Chile Serial No. 30 of 23 January 1940.

1. It has just been learned that the information contained in reference (a) was given to the American Consul in Valparaiso by a Doctor Hermann Frederick Erben who was formerly ship's doctor aboard the scuttled German merchant ship "WANDERER".

2. The following statement of Doctor Erben's activities as far as known to the American Consul in Valparaiso is given as being of possible interest to the Department. He stated that he is separated from his wife and that he has two sons of military age who are now in Germany. He went to Germany from the United States sometime in 1937 and on July 15, 1937, he signed on the U.S.S. "WANDERER" of the Deutsche Afrika Linie as ship's doctor. He stated that he had gone to Germany to get his sons out of the country, but that he was unsuccessful. The "WANDERER" was in Laurenceburg when the war broke out and that the Captain of this German ship decided to sail for South America. After 42 days at sea they arrived at Bahia Blanca in the Argentine, on October 11, 1937. Doctor Erben went to Buenos Aires on November 15 and finally made his way to Valparaiso, arriving in the latter port about 1 January 1940. He stated that he secured his discharge from the German ship on the grounds that he was going to take his own way home. By that he said he meant the United States but left the implication with German authorities that he meant Germany.

3. Doctor Erben had called upon the American Consul in Valparaiso to inquire whether or not he could be considered eligible for relief and repatriation as an American citizen on the grounds that he had previously sailed as ship's doctor on various American vessels, although his last service on an American ship was in 1937. The State Department's instructions were to the effect that he could not be extended relief owing to the length of time that had elapsed since his last service on an American vessel.

4. Doctor Erben arrived in Valparaiso about the 1st of January in the expectation of obtaining transportation to California. He eventually sailed on the Japanese vessel "ITATA" for Callao. In this vessel were travelling the members of the German crew of the scuttled "WANDERER" (see reference (b)), who were being sent back to Germany by way of Valparaiso.

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130-ERBEN HERMANN FREDERICK

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